# Department of Community Services

French-language Services Plan for 2008-2009

**Message from the Deputy Minister**

On behalf of Nova Scotia's Department of Community Services, I am pleased to present our department's French-language Services Plan for 2008-2009.

We have witnessed marked improvements in our service delivery to the Acadian and francophone communities. It is our intent to build on this momentum with this and future Plans. The progress we are making is, hopefully, reflective of the needs and priorities expressed by the Acadian and francophone community.

We look forward to being a part of this community's quest to bring about sustainable gains. Our department's commitment to client service excellence is genuine. Having French-language Services within our Client Service Initiative demonstrates the direction and dedication we place on this essential program.

The Acadian and francophone community can count on open communication with our department. We hope to play an integral part in this community's accomplishments and overall growth.

**Our department's response to public requests for communication in French**

More than simply being part of the service delivery process, our staff also contributed to the conceptualization of the French-language Service Plan. Presentations were made to both Head Office and Field staff. These served as information sessions but more importantly provided opportunities for staff to contribute to the planning process.

Our intranet site has increased the amount of information related to French-language Services. Also, the addition of a full time French-language Services Coordinator has provided Acadian and francophone communities a direct link to our programs and services.

It is our intention to adhere to Provincial Communication and Translation Guidelines. The Acadian and francophone community will be informed and consulted in a manner sensitive to their cultural and linguistic needs.

**French-language Services offered by Department of Community Services**

- Offices in Yarmouth, Digby and Inverness counties are presently offering a range of services in French. Also included are two satellite offices (Cheticamp and Meteghan) offering the majority of their services in French.
- Our department recognizes the importance Acadians and francophones place in holding meetings in their native language and consistently assigns a bilingual representative to provincial strategies.
- Early Childhood Development supports numerous programs and services aimed at assisting our young Acadians and their families in this crucial time of life.
- Our department is helping Transition Homes increase the services they offer to the Acadian and francophone communities.
- We now have a full time French-language Coordinator dedicated to advancing our commitment towards this initiative.
- Many of our offices and staff proudly identify themselves as being able to offer services in French with the provincial 'Bonjour' logo.

**How the plan will contribute to the preservation or growth of the Acadian and francophone communities**

Many of the enhancements referred to in this French-language Service Plan are Policy and Protocol driven. This ensures our department's long term commitment to this vital initiative.

## Corporate goals and objectives for 2008-09

| Objectives | Progress on 2007-2008 Plan | Goals | Planned Actions/Activities for 2008-2009 |
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| **Objective 1**<br>**Strengthening the policy, regulatory, and administrative framework in support of the French-language Services Act** | • Ensured representation from Community Services on French-language Services Coordinating Committee | **1.1 Fulfill obligations determined in the French-language Services Act** | • Continued participation on French-language Services Coordinating Committee and sub committee. Designate now in place to ensure representation<br>• French-language Services will continue as an identified priority in our department's Business Continuity Plan |
| | • French-language Services Coordinator now full time position<br>• Revised Client Services Initiative policies to incorporate French-language Service<br>• Bilingual Regional Specialist added to the Child and Youth Strategy in the Western Region | **1.2 Enhance departmental capacity to deliver French-language Services** | • Review internal Department of Community Services policies/protocols and identify where French-language Services can be incorporated<br>• Collaborate with other departments and their French-language Services Coordinators to integrate French services into interdepartmental initiates ie: Human Resources, Child and Youth Strategy, etc. |
| **Objectives** | **Progress on 2007-2008 Plan** | **Goals** | **Planned Actions/Activities for 2008-2009** |

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| **Objective 2**<br><br>**Consulting with the Acadian and francophone communities** | • Department of Community Services participated in Federation of Acadian Parents of NS and Federation of Acadian Women of NS Annual General Meetings<br>• Client comment cards now available to any Department of Community Services office across N.S.<br>• Department of Community Services participated in ongoing provincial consultations aimed at alleviating challenges faced by French Early Childcare Services<br>• Employment Support and Income Assistance appeals can now be performed in french | **2.1 Establishment and prioritization of French-language Services to be offered, and strategies or approaches for service delivery** | • Department of Community Services will adhere to provincial guidelines when consulting with the francophone community ie: Bilingual Poverty Reduction Strategy questionnaire, Client Comment Cards, etc.<br>• Department of Community Services will continue to be represented at provincial Acadian Association meetings<br>• French-language Services is being integrated into all Client Services protocols and overall Initiatives ie: waiting area and telephone, etc. |

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| **Objective 3**<br>**Communicating, sharing information and promoting services available in French** | • Increased French-language Services material on intranet site<br>• Provincial 'Bonjour' Strategy adopted by our department. The public can now identify offices and staff able to offer services in French<br>• 50 Skills Link projects have been posted in both official languages<br>• Department of Community Services has increased the amount of translated public material (20,000 words) ie; *Weaving the Threads, Our Kids are Worth it* brochure<br>• We have increased the amount of written and verbal responses in French | **3.1 Public information available in both languages** | • Prioritize, translate and make available information and material relevant to the Acadian and francophone population such as printed publications, website material, promotional items and news releases<br>• Continue working with N.S. Professional Associations in identifying French Service Providers<br>• Department of Community Services will continue to be represented at Provincial Acadian and Francophone Organization meetings<br>• Supply bilingual Mission/Vision/Values plaques and other French material to designated waiting areas within our organization |
| | • French-language Services presentations offered to Head Office staff, Regional Management Teams and Community groups<br>• Satellite office opened in Meteghan<br>• French-language Services highlighted on Client Services Initiative Desktop publication | **3.2 Increase employee and public awareness of the approach by government to provide French-language Services** | • French-language Services to be added to Client Service Initiative staff survey<br>• Presentations on French-language Services will be offered to Casework Supervisors, Provincial Conferences and will be included to Staff Orientation<br>• Collaborate with other departments to establish Acadian Cultural Awareness course |

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| **Objective 4**<br>**Supporting French-language Services development, planning and delivery in priority areas** | • French-language Services now standing agenda item and integral part of provincial Client Service Advisory committee | **4.1 Development and adaptation plans and strategies for French-language service delivery as part of annual planning process** | • Consultation on French-language Service Plan will include Client Service Advisory Committee<br>• French-language Services Plan will continue to be developed based on priorities identified by Acadian and francophone communities, Organizations and Stakeholders |
| | • Department of Community Services has seen an increase in the amount of posted bilingual positions<br>• Amount of staff participating in French-language training has steadily increased | **4.2 Coordinated approach to deal with human resources issues related to the delivery of French-language Services** | • Client Service Initiative/ French-language Services consult with HR representative on ongoing basis<br>• Concentrate French Training in priority areas- ie: reception/ front line/ high demand areas<br>• Evaluate our French-language capacity and develop protocol to render greater efficiencies and collaboration between offices and programs<br>• Collaborate with new Public Service Commission French-language Services Policy Analyst |
| | • Assisted third party service providers with French-language Services initiatives ie: Transition house web translation, Early Childhood Development meetings<br>• Attended provincial Acadian Association meetings ie; FPANE, FFANE, CJP<br>• Department of Community Services continued to play an active role in Hub Model implementation phase | **4.3 Support community initiatives that address the needs of the Acadian and francophone community** | • Our organization will continue to play a major role in assisting third party service providers in their efforts to deliver French services to the Acadian and francophone communities<br>• Department of Community Services will participate in Provincial Acadian Associations' Annual General meetings |